

Cork scientists ranked as world leaders in probiotic research

Ireland's scientists are punching above their weight on a global stage. This is according to the independent international ratings agency Thomson Reuters Science Watch global analysis, which tracks trends and performance in research disciplines according to scientific publications. University College Cork weighs in at number 2 in the world for probiotics research, due primarily to publications from researchers in the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre (APC), a research centre funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). The report, based on overall citations of APC research publications over the past 10 years, was published on <http://sciencewatch.com/ana/st/probiotics/institution/>. The report also indicated that 6 present and former APC researchers ranked in the top 20 of more than 15,000 authors globally, namely Prof Fergus Shanahan, Prof Gerald Fitzgerald, Dr Liam O'Mahony and Prof Kevin Collins, from UCC, and Prof Paul Ross and Dr Catherine Stanton from Teagasc Food Research Centre, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co Cork.

Welcoming the achievement Mr John Travers, Director General, Science Foundation Ireland, stated that "Global Industry Analysts (GIA) have predicted that the global probiotics food market will be worth \$30billion by 2015, even though the industry is still in its infancy. This market has huge potential economic benefit to Ireland, and the role of the APC is to put rigorous science behind the mode of action and health claims of probiotics."

The APC, a centre for gut health in Cork, represents a collaboration amongst basic scientists and physician-scientists at University College Cork, Teagasc Moorepark Food Research Centre and, more recently, Cork Institute of Technology. In congratulating APC researchers, Mr Simon Coveney T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine said "Researchers from Cork deserve recognition for their continued pursuit of excellence in Probiotics. Clearly they are reaching and maintaining high standards of research, making APC a global leader in the area of Probiotic and Food research". As Dr Sally Cudmore, General Manager of the APC, stated yesterday, "we don't wish to overstate this, but The Thomson Reuters ranking of APC researchers in Cork is testimony to the quality and impact of Irish science and is tangible evidence of the wisdom of governmental investment in developing human capital through science in Ireland.

The APC and other Irish scientists are delivering on this investment and this is how Irish ideas can get to a global market place." In addition to seed funding from Science Foundation Ireland, APC researchers have been awarded research grants from other agencies including Enterprise Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Health Research Board, the Higher Education Authority, and from various indigenous and multinational industries. They have also successfully competed for research grants from the European Union. Over 700 scientific articles have been generated by the APC scientists within the past 7 years, many of which have appeared in and featured on the covers of high-impact international journals. The APC has strong industry partners in Alimentary Health Ltd, an Irish speciality biotechnology company, and the multinational GlaxoSmithKline, as well as collaborating with more than 20 Irish and international food, biotechnology and

pharmaceutical companies. APC researchers have filed 23 patent applications and negotiated 4 licences.